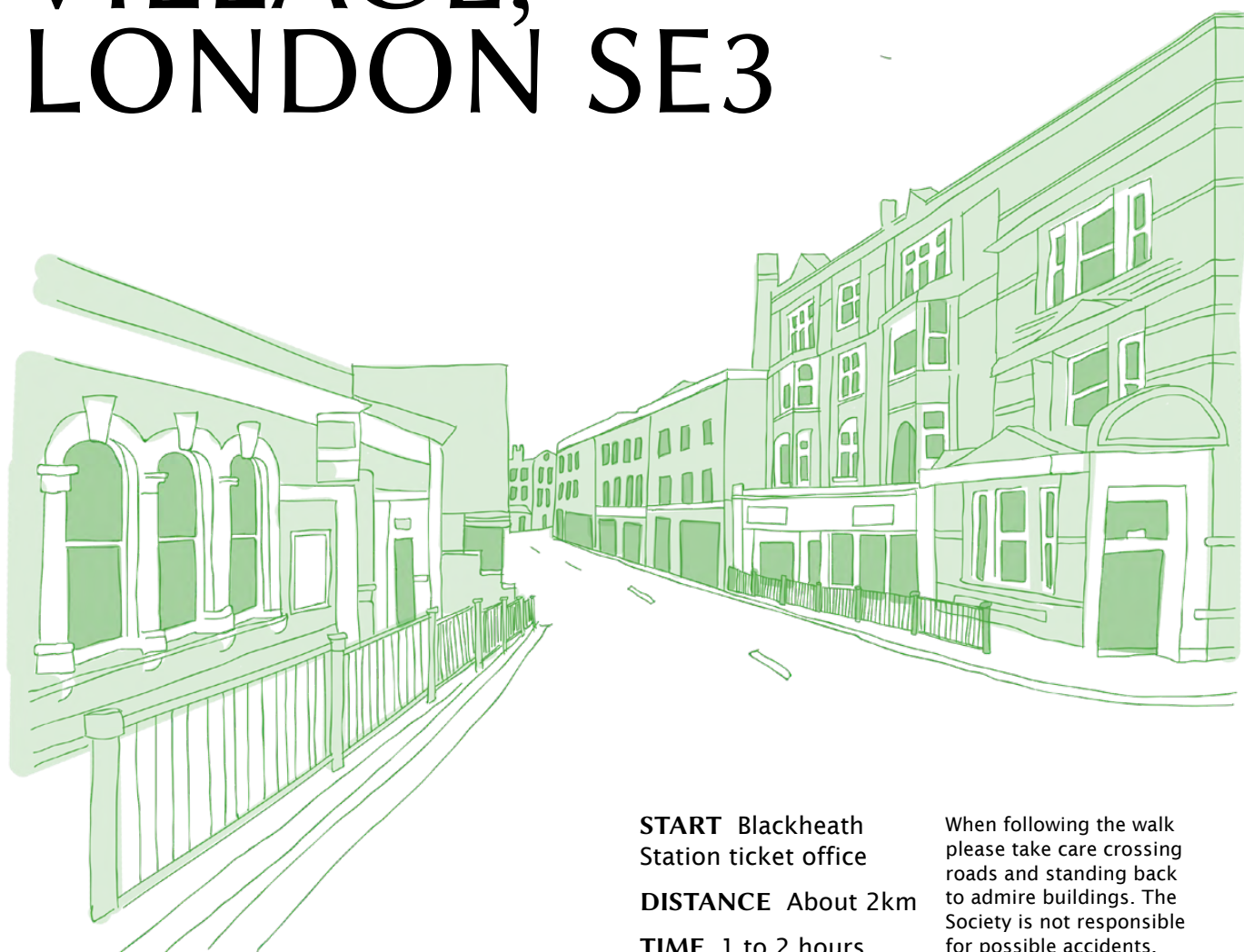




OPEN HOUSE 2020

# SELF GUIDED WALK OF BLACKHEATH VILLAGE, LONDON SE3



**START** Blackheath  
Station ticket office

**DISTANCE** About 2km

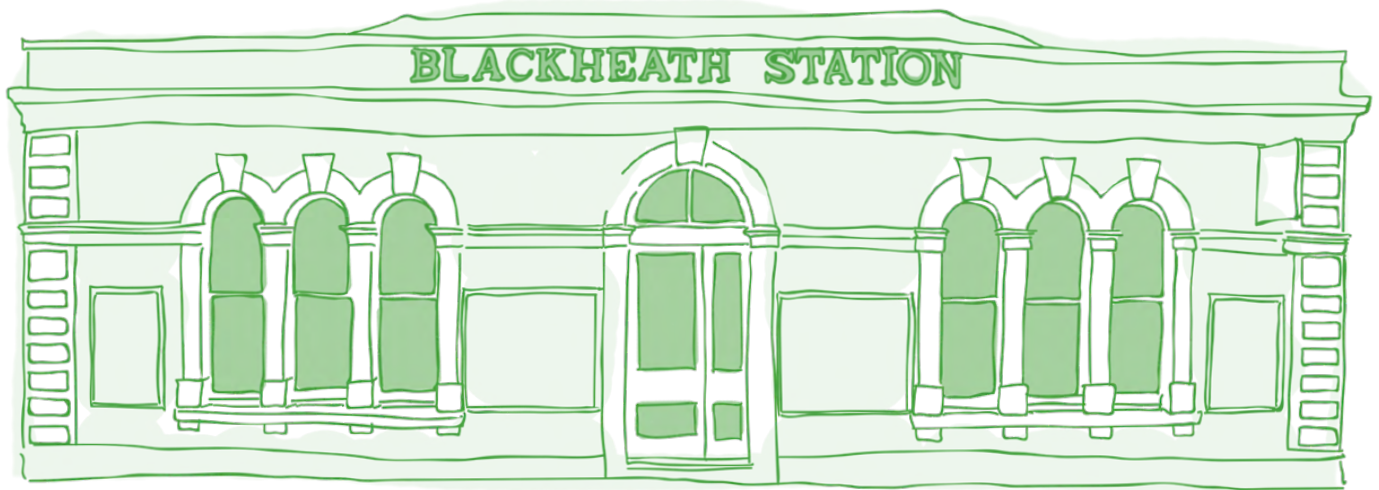
**TIME** 1 to 2 hours

When following the walk  
please take care crossing  
roads and standing back  
to admire buildings. The  
Society is not responsible  
for possible accidents.

# WELCOME TO BLACKHEATH VILLAGE ON BEHALF OF THE BLACKHEATH SOCIETY.

This walk will introduce you to a little of the history of the Village and people of the area. We will focus on the buildings, their uses and some of the stories behind them. Blackheath is a colourful and surprising place, we hope you enjoy the walk.

WE START AT **BLACKHEATH STATION**, BUILT IN 1849 TO A DESIGN BY GEORGE SMITH, THIS WAS KEY TO THE DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH OF THE VILLAGE.



The first passenger railway line south of the river ran from London Bridge to Greenwich in 1836, but terminated at Greenwich Park. A connection was needed to Woolwich so a branch line was created via Blackheath. The line followed the valley of the Kid Brook, the stream was placed in a culvert and still runs below your feet today. The station building is the only one remaining in the style adopted by North Kent Railways for stations along this line. The station master originally had his house and extensive garden

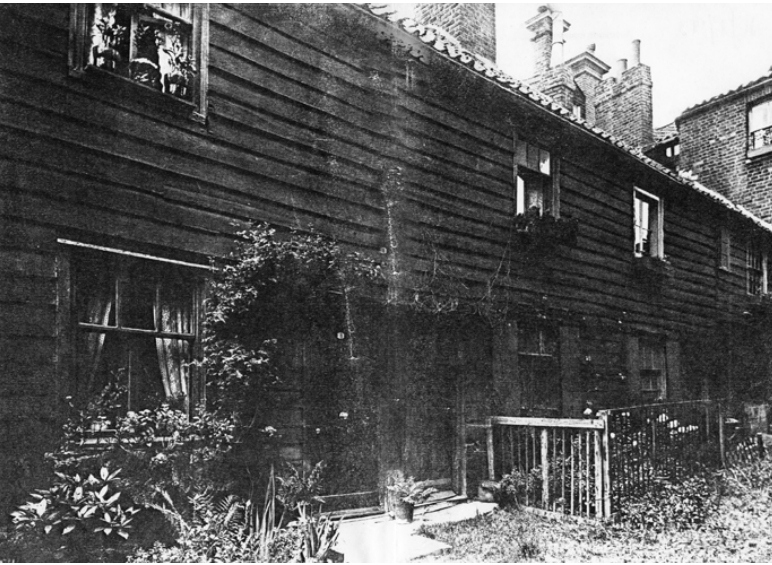
behind the London-bound platform. On exiting the station turn left. The façade of the station was originally symmetrical in its Classical design. To the side of the station you will see a minicab firm; its office used to be the gentleman's toilet for the station. In the open space beyond was the coal yard. One can imagine the horses and carts waiting on the cobbles ready to make deliveries round the district. It was used as a marshalling yard until the 1950s and is now mostly a car park and a farmer's market on Sunday mornings.

## MARSHALLING YARD





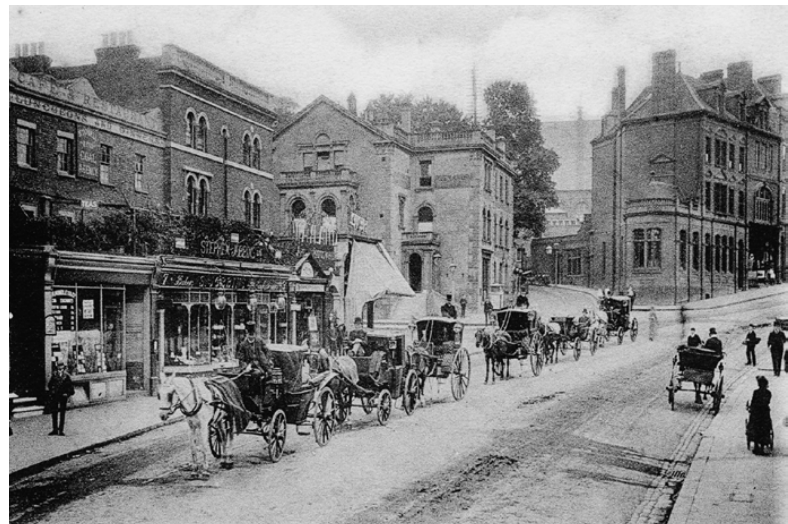
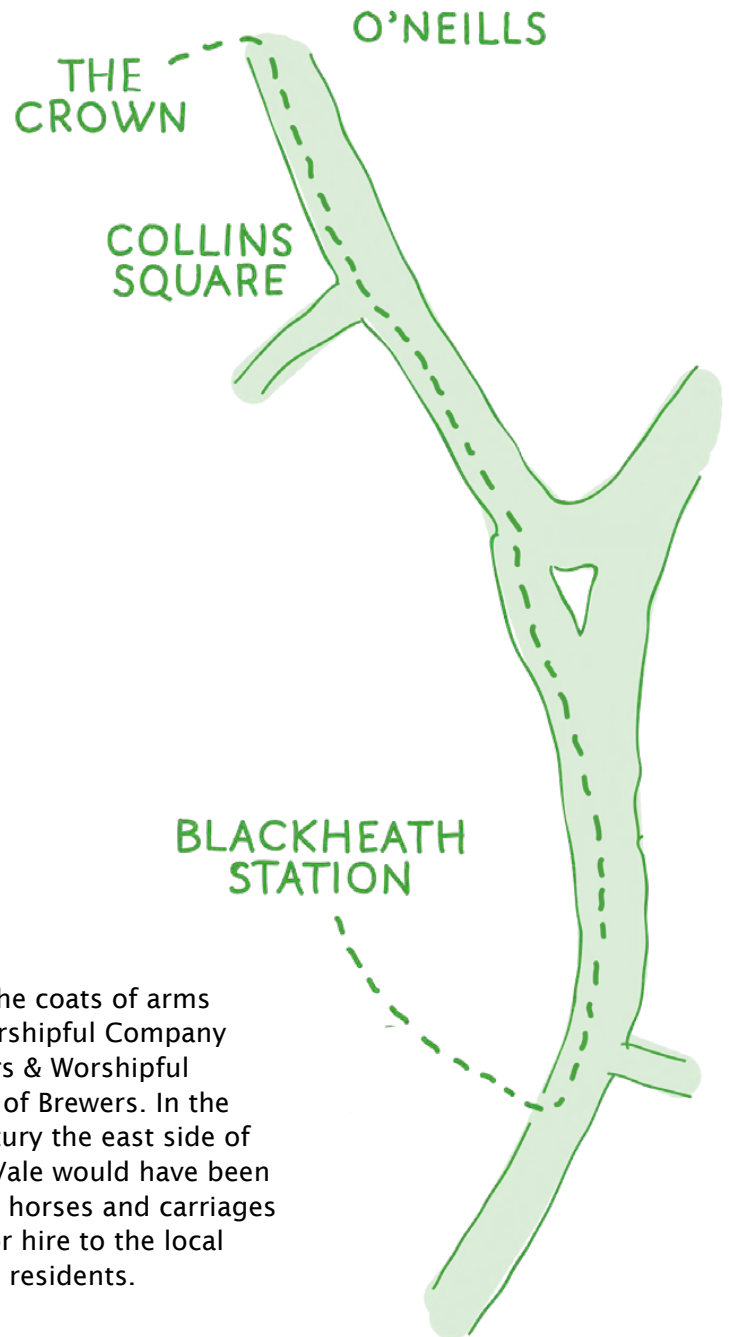
FROM THIS SIDE OF THE STATION HEAD INTO THE VILLAGE SO YOU ARE GOING NORTH.



COLLINS SQUARE

You will pass the Café Madeleine, the shop Jigsaw, Spencer Yard and other shops. Proceed until the pavement widens. Shops were opened as the Village developed in the 19th century and have offered the residents a full range of merchandise as the years have gone by. There were outfitters, butchers, fishmongers, greengrocers, jewellers, milliners and chemists to name but a few. Keeping to your left as you make your way up Tranquil Vale towards the pub, The Crown, you will pass buildings that pre date the railway and form the oldest part of the Village. After you pass Costa Coffee you will come to the weatherboard houses of **Collins Square**, 1798, Belmont (dry cleaners) and others. These were typical domestic dwellings of this period and included the first village Post office, 1809. Their survival to this day is remarkable. **The Crown** was first built in 1740, (the present building dates from 1885). The pub **O'Neill's** (opposite behind the trees) was originally called The Three Tuns, built 1737. It was a coaching inn and had a large garden stretching down the hill. The original name alludes to the three

casks in the coats of arms of the Worshipful Company of Vintners & Worshipful Company of Brewers. In the 19th Century the east side of Tranquil Vale would have been lined with horses and carriages waiting for hire to the local well-to-do residents.



CABS OPPOSITE BLACKHEATH STATION IN 1905

BEYOND THE CROWN THERE USED TO BE A LARGE HOUSE, GARDEN AND SHOPS BUT THESE WERE ALL LOST WHEN BLACKHEATH WAS THE VICTIM OF A ZEPPELIN RAID IN AUGUST 1916.



FOLLOWING THE ZEPPELIN RAID  
IN AUGUST 1916

The Arts & Crafts style building of the [Mary Evans Picture Library](#) which you can see now, was designed by a local resident, Charles Canning Winmill and was a gift to All Saint's church. Initially it was the Parish Hall. It was the venue for the Blackheath Society's inaugural meeting in 1937 and was used as a civic restaurant during WWII was also where people came for assistance if they had been bombed out. It was also used as a Public Health Clinic. In 1988 the Mary Evans Picture Library with its remarkable collection of images, ephemera and historical documents moved to this site [www.maryevans.com](http://www.maryevans.com).

Continue to Daiva's, the hairdressers. This is one of the earliest shops in the Village and from 1800 to 1916 it was a bakery, as is suggested by the sheaves of corn on the pilasters near the door. Continue along the raised pavement of Tranquil Vale until you reach the open space adjacent to the main part of the Heath at [Lloyds Place](#) outside Eastnor House, dated 1750.



SHEEP BEING DRIVEN

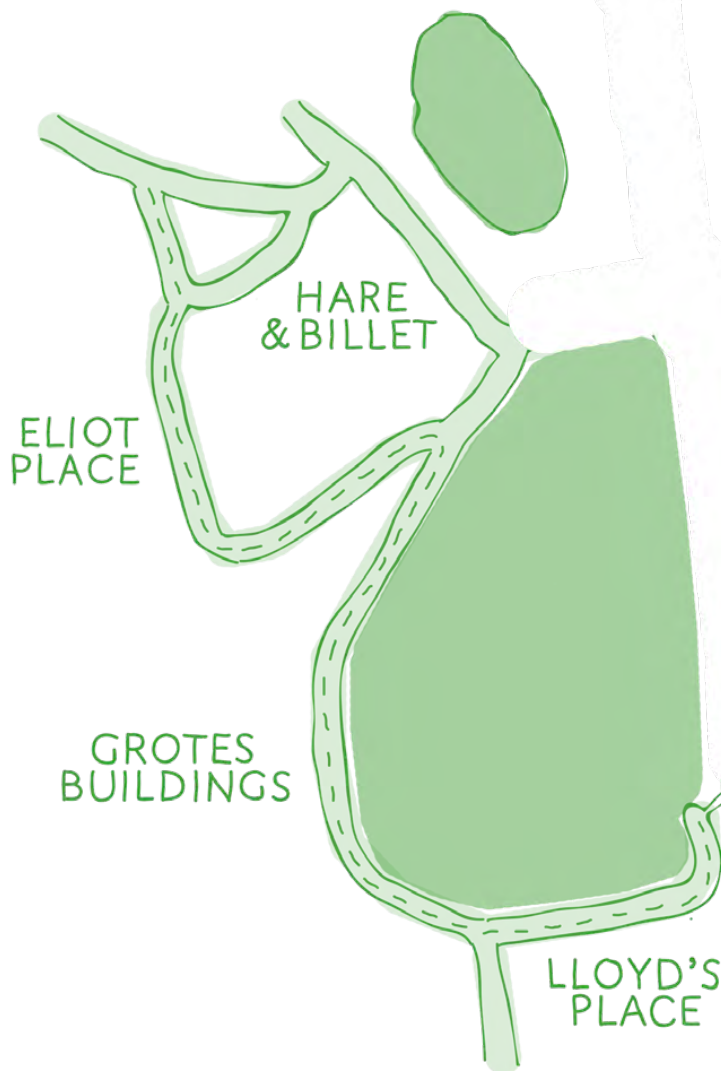
You have been following the old drovers' road. Livestock from Kent and Sussex were driven this way crossing the ford of the Kid Brook at the site of the current station, and then the Heath on their way to Smithfield in the City. Following the success of the Duke of Bedford's development of his land at Covent Garden, the owner of the west side of the Heath let the land to developers for a similar project. It began at the top of Blackheath Hill, and included Dartmouth Row, and extends round the edge of the Heath southwards to Eliot Vale, Grotes Place and [Eastnor House](#). The new development included many fine houses, inns and schools. Although this is not now considered part of the Village this contributed to its development.





GO LEFT INTO  
LLOYDS PLACE. AT  
THE JUNCTION WITH  
CAMDEN ROW YOU  
WILL COME TO  
LINDSEY HOUSE.

This is another good example of Georgian architecture with the use of brick to build a harmonious and balanced simple design with an elegant fan light above the front door. Somehow it has retained its original railings although these are now in a poor state of repair. Next comes **Grotes Buildings**. In 1937 at No 6 a group of pioneering social researchers established their headquarters for Mass Observation studies. They gathered material about everyday life from which they were able to gauge public opinion and gather statistics. The archive is now kept at Sussex University from where the work of Mass Observation continues. [www.massobs.org.uk](http://www.massobs.org.uk)



## LINDSEY HOUSE



At the end of this fine terrace, go down the small slope by the smart pastiche Georgian terrace built in the 1990s. It replaces a horse bus station and a 1940s electrical factory. Continue on to the corner of Eliot Place. Numbers 16 & 17 form a surprising 1960s house with replacement Critall-style windows and Art Nouveau style stained glass. This forms a sharp contrast to its neighbours Number 14 & 15 which are of the Romantic Strawberry Hill style of Gothic.

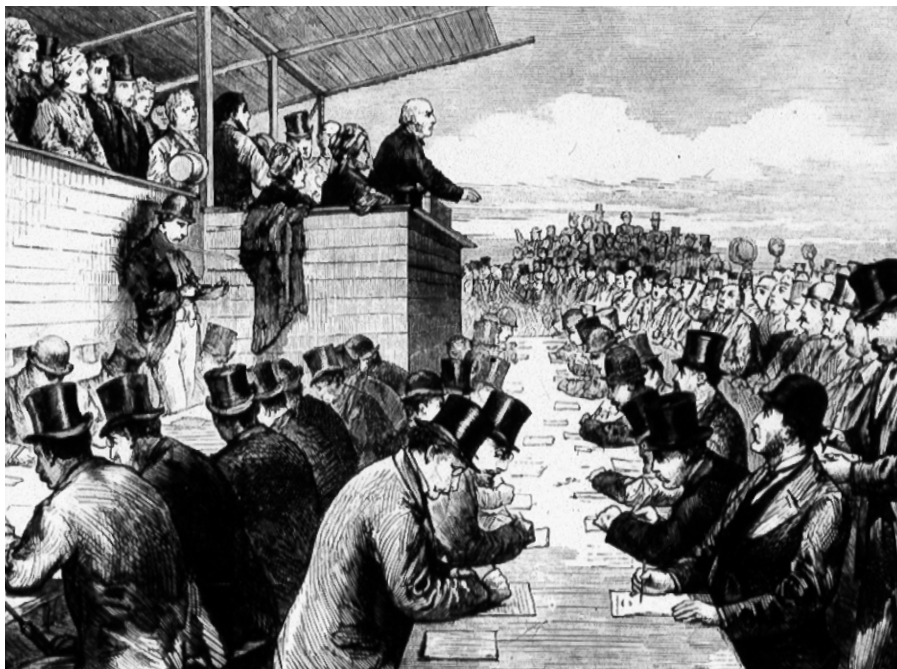
Behind you is the **Hare & Billet** pub, in place by 1765, a former coaching stop and close to a drovers' pond.



FROM HERE YOU WILL HAVE AN EXPANSIVE VIEW OF THE OPEN SPACE OF THE HEATH. THIS HAS BEEN THE SITE OF MANY HISTORICAL EVENTS.

Wat Tyler and the Peasants Revolt in 1381, the welcoming of Henry V after the Battle of Agincourt (1415) and the welcome of Anne of Cleves in 1540. Political hustings, preachers and their crowds and suffragettes have gathered on the Heath.

GLADSTONE ADDRESSES CROWD



Nowadays the Heath is best known for the start of the London Marathon, fairs and circuses and open air concerts. A variety of sports have always been played here and continue to this day. The Heath used to be a series of gravel pits interspersed with windmills, trees, bushes and open spaces which provided the locals with opportunities for playing golf, cricket, shinty and donkey riding. Also the famed Blackheath Pedestrian, George Wilson, who was part of the gambling craze of the 18th century. He undertook timed distance walks round the Heath and money was waged as to how long it would take him. Many of the gravel pits were filled in, mostly with rubble from WWII bombing, which is why much of the Heath is flat today.



GRAVEL PITS



CONTINUE ALONG THE  
RIGHT HAND SIDE OF THE  
POND AND CROSS THE MINI  
ROUNDBOUT INTO **DUKE  
HUMPHRY ROAD**.



#### **WASHERWOMAN'S BOTTOM**



**Blackheath Vale** is an example of a past gravel pit which has been built in. Light industry initially, followed by housing and All Saint's school. Continue on to **Number 8, Duke Humphrey Road**, here you will find an example of a recent distinctive building. In 2005 Richard Grierson, local Architect and potter, converted his home, a 1960s semi-detached house, to this contemporary wood and glass design. The house enjoys wonderful views across the Heath.

Now walk across the Heath towards **All Saints' Church**. To your left is the elegant late Georgian terrace which includes the Clarendon Hotel, and, to the right, Royal Parade, named to mark the betrothal of the Prince of Wales to Princess Alexandra of Denmark, in 1863. This area of the Heath by the church, used to be known as Washer Woman's Bottom, as the laundresses from this side of the Village used the bushes and poles to dry their washing. One of the bye laws of the Heath, 1893, put a stop to this practice.



## ALL SAINTS' CHURCH WAS BUILT IN 1857 TO THE DESIGN OF BENJAMIN FERRY.

It was called "the three barns" for many years, as was suggested by the design of the roofs; the spire was not added until 1867 and the porch by Sir Arthur Blomfield in 1898. Until this time there had been no Anglican church in the Village. Blackheath residents attended other churches, for example, St Margaret's Lee, the Cator Proprietary Chapel in Blackheath Park or St Mary's in Ladywell. The latter is an earlier spa village, and many of the local residents from this time are buried there. You may have noticed that All Saints' Church is unusual in having no grave yard. Margareta Lemon one of the founders of the RSPB, was a Blackheath resident who began her campaign against ladies wearing hats with bird feathers and sometimes even whole (stuffed) birds by slipping notes against this fashion to her fellow church goers.



LADIES HAT WITH WHOLE BIRDS



BRIGADE HOUSE



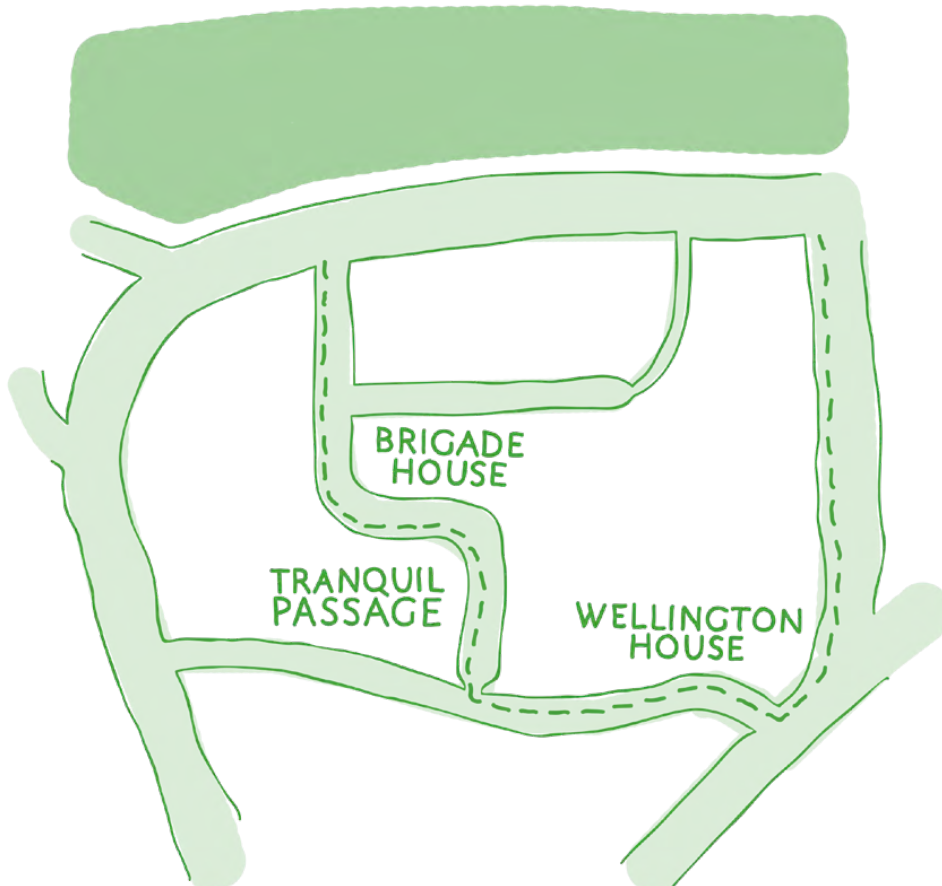
Cross the road and walk along [Royal Parade](#) to Côte Brasserie. Before Royal Parade was constructed there was a large house called Phoenix House, which ironically burnt down. This event may have prompted the building of [Brigade Street](#), Brigade House and stables whose entrance lies between Côte and Buenos Aires Restaurants. Brigade House was the fire station and was set up by public demand in 1865. The horses could be harnessed and on the road in three and a half minutes. Originally there was a tall lookout tower which was used for practice and drying hoses. In 1895 the Fire Stations at Lee Green and Charlton opened and the Blackheath Village Station closed in 1908. In the mews there were blacksmiths, farriers, carpenters and other tradesmen.

## FOLLOW THE NARROW COBBLED STREETS ROUND BEHIND BRIGADE HOUSE.

These small terraced houses, now bijou and desirable, were originally over-crowded hovels with poor sanitation and suffered outbreaks of cholera.

You will now come to the junction with [Tranquil Passage](#) and the old Village School, now called Tranquil Hall. It was built in 1851 for local children, with about 120 in attendance, aged 4 to 10. By 1938 pupil numbers had outgrown the building and the school moved across to new premises at Blackheath Vale. The building was then used as a meeting room, the Village Library, a recording studio and now forms part of Heath House School.

ALL SAINTS SCHOOL



Walk along Tranquil Passage passing The Fabric Shop until you emerge onto [Montpelier Vale](#). Turning to your left at Wellington House and beyond we now have many restaurants and estate agents along this side of the Village, including a branch of The Ivy. Originally they were all shops and tea rooms. Note the unusual ladies at the top of the pilasters between the shops. We have yet to learn why they have stars on their foreheads. In the 1920s the motor trade established themselves in this part of the Village with Watling Tyres starting up at the corner. In the 1960s the firm moved to Catford where it is still trading.



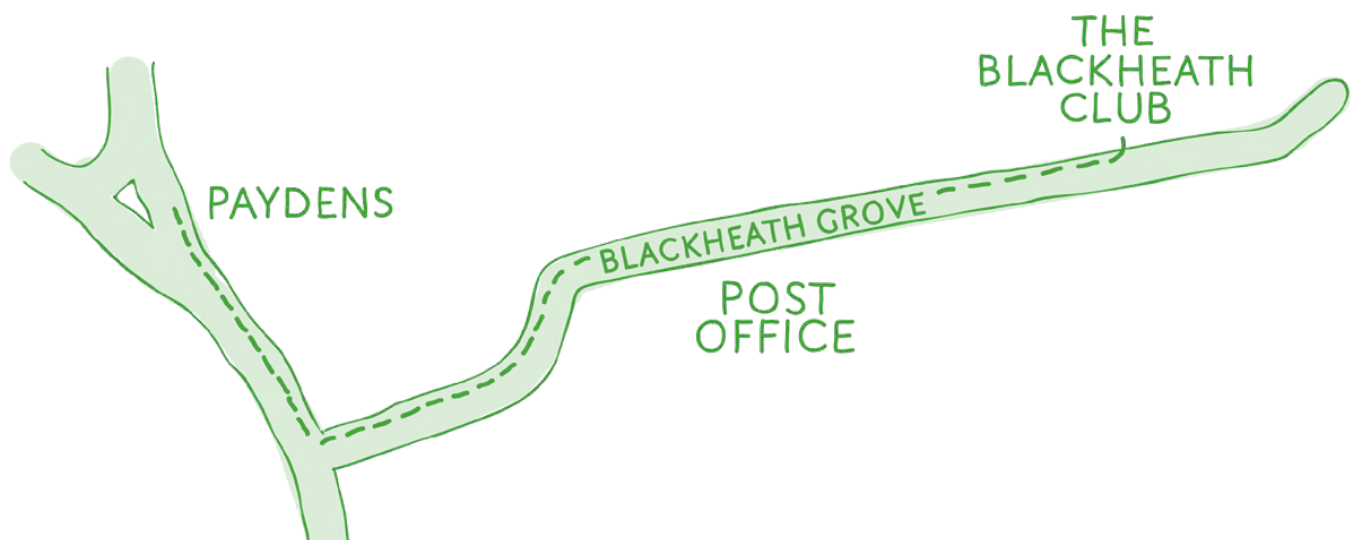
TURN AROUND, DO NOT  
CROSS THE ROAD AND  
HEAD DOWN THE HILL OF  
MONTPELIER VALE, INTO  
THE VILLAGE.

At numbers 24 & 28 you will see the old premises of the Express Dairy Company. It was the first branch to be opened here. In its day it had a grand façade, a triple arch with cow horns on the top of the pilasters, sadly removed in the 1970s. The company used the railway to bring the milk from the farms of Eltham and Kidbrooke, where it was processed, bottled and then distributed around the district until the 1980s.



Numbers 14 & 12, formed Thomas Watson's a butcher's shop. Note the gates. This was the entrance for deliveries and to a slaughterhouse - they sold fresh meat. In front of Number 10, Mary's Living and Giving for Save the Children, there is a pavement hatch. This shop used to be The White Hart Beer House and its façade has barely altered since being built. We have arrived at Tuck's Corner, now John Payne the estate agent. The original building was established in 1836 by Barber Tuck, grocer and wine merchant, who died after choking on a fish supper in 1865. He was so respected that most of the Village traders closed their doors for the duration of his funeral. The building continued as a grocery store until the 1980s.

## CROSS THE ROADS TO ARRIVE AT NO. 30 TRANQUIL VALE.



**Paydens** has always been a dispensing chemist since 1840 and was once a branch of Boots from 1944 to 1981. **No 28, Greggs**, was the shop of clock and watchmaker Mr John Bennett who had a large clock which dominated the village. This row of shops was one of the many casualties of a V2 rocket that devastated much of the Village in March 1945. If you continue along the pavement you will come to Blackheath Grove where in fact most of the damage occurred.



BOMBED BLACKHEATH GROVE

There was a Wesleyan Methodist Church, a Parish hall, a residence for the minister, and Bath Place which consisted of two small streets of tiny cottages. All were destroyed. Five people were killed in the attack and 50 injured. The existing school, shops and car park are examples of post-war quick-fix architecture.

At this point you may wish to walk up Blackheath Grove. The white house at **numbers 13 and 14**, was The Blackheath Club. It was built as a facility for gentlemen to escape their families and was complete with deep armchairs, copies of The Times, The Daily Telegraph and plenty of billiard tables. Next door at **numbers 15 & 16** from 1909 to 1927, was the headquarters for the Blackheath Institution for the Supply of Hospital Trained Nurses an essential service for the Village. The site opposite, now occupied by the post office and its sorting depot, has been a nursery garden and florists, a swimming pool, outdoor concert arena, skating rink and a venue for Edwardian ladies to learn to ride a bicycle in private.



## CROSS THE RAILWAY BRIDGE TO THE FISH AND SHISH SHOP.

This is Brunswick Terrace and has an interesting history. To build the railway it was necessary to knock down three shops that had just been built. **Shepherd's** used to be Jobbins Bakery with a large Tea Room until the 1970s. In common with many bakers in past times, Jobbins would sell yesterday's bread to the poor at the back door. **The Age Exchange Reminiscence Centre** is a community-run project and café established in 1988 by local resident Pam Schweitzer. It has a colourful history. Initially it was the studio of photographer Henry Wayland, 1861-1922. We can still see the "W" and "a" in the iron work on the gate of the entrance.



AGE EXCHANGE REMINISCENCE CENTRE



Later it became the well-known shop CLOBBER established by Jeff Banks founder of the fashion chain Warehouse. The shop was also the first commercial outlet for local girl, Mary Quant, before she moved her iconic shop and fashion business to the King's Road. The business **Go Travel**, was an early branch (1892) for grocer John James Sainsbury. His empire was first established in 1869 in Woolwich and soon prospered. Above the parade, from 1892 to 1894 at Number 3 there was a Ladies Reading Room set up by **Florence Gadsden**, the formidable head mistress of Blackheath High School who was active in the Women's Suffrage movement. She often held Suffrage meetings in Jobbins Tea Rooms.

[www.oxforddnb.com](http://www.oxforddnb.com) or  
[www.greenwich100.com/a-role-model-of-a-Blackheath-Headteacher](http://www.greenwich100.com/a-role-model-of-a-Blackheath-Headteacher)



YOU MAY WISH TO WALK  
BENNETT PARK A ROAD  
WHICH BOASTS NO  
FEWER THAN THREE  
BLUE PLAQUES WHICH  
ARE OF GREAT INTEREST  
AND SELF-EXPLANATORY.



DONALD MCGILL - SELF PORTRAIT

Cross Cresswell Park and continue to walk up the hill. These buildings used to be part of the department store Hinds. At the mini roundabout you will come to The Conservatoire, Art School and Halls built in 1896. In 1881 William Webster led a group of cultural enthusiasts to establish this cultural legacy for the area. The Conservatoire and Blackheath Art School has had notable students and teachers; Douglas Percy Bliss, wood engraver, art critic, founder of the Blackheath Society, and good friend of Edward Bawden and Eric Ravilious, both frequent visitors to Blackheath. Jools Holland, Kate Bush and Gary Oldman are amongst the famous Conservatoire alumnae. [www.conservatoire.org.uk](http://www.conservatoire.org.uk)



THE HALLS HAVE HAD A  
CHEQUERED HISTORY  
AND HAVE RECENTLY  
BEEN EXTENSIVELY  
RESTORED AND TAKEN  
OVER BY TRINITY  
LABAN CONSERVATOIRE  
OF MUSIC AND DANCE.



BLACKHEATH PROPRIETARY SCHOOL - 1920S

The Halls are a centre for Trinity music students to rehearse and perform. A range of concerts, talks and community activities take place at the Halls which, with their excellent acoustics attract many large orchestral ensembles for rehearsals and recordings.  
[www.blackheathhalls.com](http://www.blackheathhalls.com)

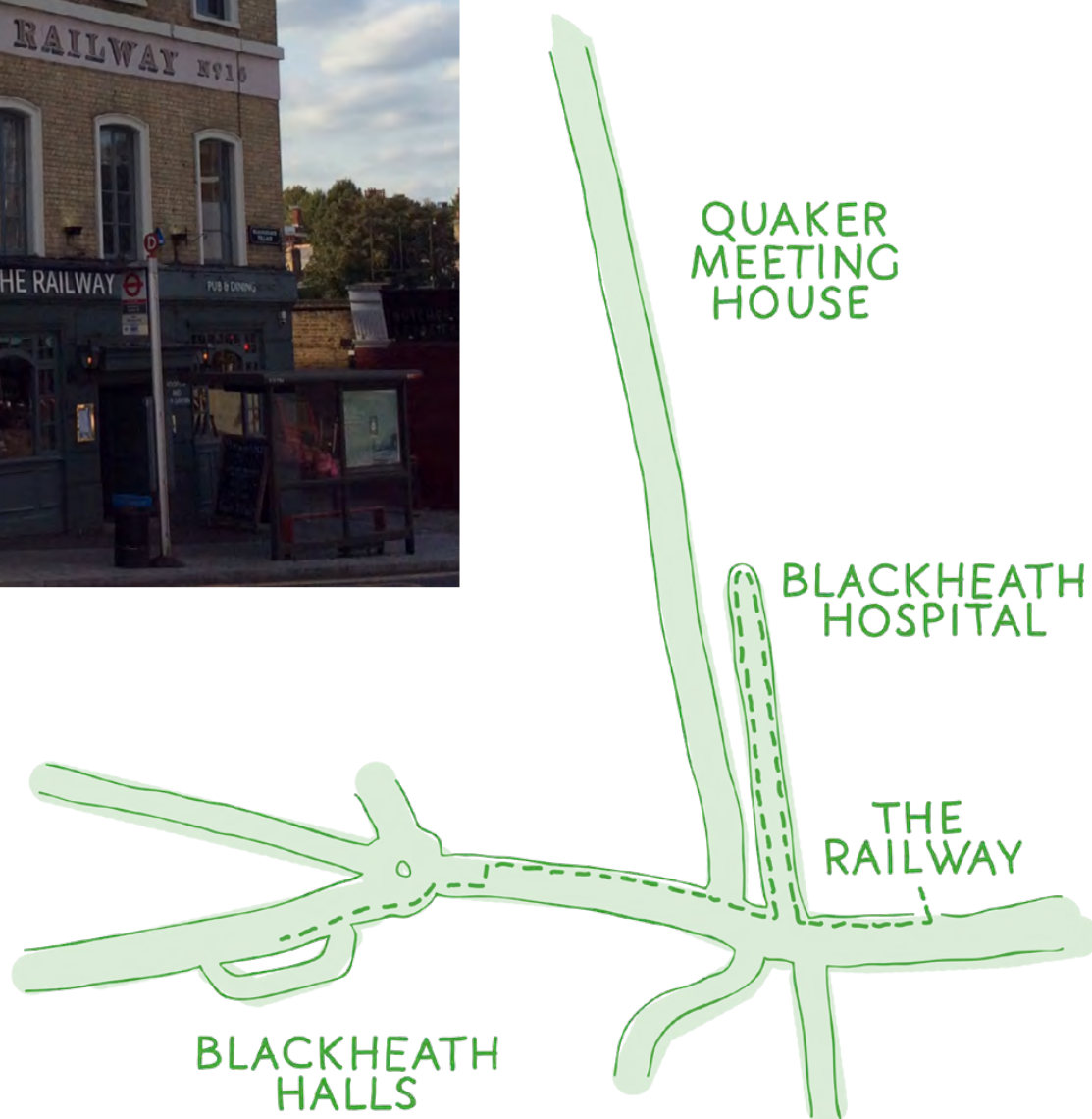
Before crossing the road to return to the Village note the red building on the opposite corner. This is [Selwyn Court](#). It was built in 1937 replacing a well-known

boys school, The Blackheath Proprietary School colloquially known as "The Prop". Selwyn was the name of the outstanding headmaster. The building style outraged the local residents in its modernistic design abutting the pavement. This was around the time the Blackheath Society was formed to provide local residents with a voice in decisions regarding the development of Blackheath. Selwyn Court was just one of its first pressing matters.





THE RAILWAY



## NOW RETURN DOWN THE HILL TO THE STATION.

You will pass [Independents Road](#), so named for the various places of worship that have been and gone along this stretch. The Outpatients' Department of Blackheath Hospital was originally built in 1857 as a School for the Sons and Orphans of Missionaries. It outgrew its premises in 1912 and the school moved to Eltham, to become Eltham College. The recently designed Number 9 Steeple House, next door was built in the school's playground. It blends

sympathetically with its neighbour. The concrete Quaker Friend's Meeting House at the far end was built to a design by Trevor Dannatt in 1972. It is Grade II listed and a good example of the brutalist style.

The [Railway Tavern](#) brings you to the end of our walk. They have been serving food and drink since 1849 do continue to support them. Enjoy.



## THE PRINCIPAL SOURCES FOR THIS SHORT WALK ARE WALKING THE VILLAGE AND WALKING THE HEATH BY NEIL RHIND AND ROGER MARSHALL.

The principal sources for this short walk are WALKING THE VILLAGE and WALKING THE HEATH by Neil Rhind and Roger Marshall. Both books are available from The Blackheath Bookshop, (the local Waterstones), The Bookshop on The Heath or the Blackheath Society. [www.blackheath.org](http://www.blackheath.org). Price £10 each. Both books contain many photos, maps, drawings and more details than this short walk can provide.

Further information can also be found from the seven Storyboards that are located around the Heath. A map of their locations is on the Blackheath Society's Notice board in the station ticket office and on our website. The Society has an extensive archive collection of images and reminiscences of Blackheath. [www.blackheath.org](http://www.blackheath.org).